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TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Hillsman asked that this be called to your attention BKS

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CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L NOFORN/CONTINUED CONTROL

COUNTRY	SOUTH VIETNAM	REPORT NO.	TDCS -3/502,553
SUBJECT	STRATEGIC HAMLETS	DATE DISTR.	20 FEBRUARY 1962
		PRECEDENCE	ROUTINE
DATE OF INFO.	MID-FEBRUARY 1962	FIELD NO.	FVS-7075 IN 30145
PLACE & DATE ACQ.	VIETNAM, SAIGON (14 FEBRUARY 1962)		

FILE

RETAIN OR DESTROY

APPRAISAL IT IS PROBABLY TRUE THAT NHU'S VIEWS ARE AS EXPRESSED, AND THAT LUONG CORRECTLY REPEATED NHU'S STATEMENTS.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE AN AMERICAN OBSERVER (B), WITH PARAS. 1-3 FROM NGO DINH NHU, AND PARA. 4 FROM BUI VAN LUONG.

1. NGO DINH NHU, BROTHER AND POLITICAL ADVISOR OF PRESIDENT NGO DINH DIEM, STATED ON 14 FEBRUARY 1962 THAT THE STRATEGIC HAMLETS' PROGRAM WOULD BE MORE THAN A METHOD OF AFFORDING DEFENSE FOR THE POPULATION OF VIETNAM, IT WOULD BE A BASIC STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF VIETNAM. HE STATED THAT A COMMON COMPLAINT IN VIETNAM WAS THE WEAKNESS OF ITS CADRES, WHO FAILED TO TURN THE GOVERNMENT'S REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAM INTO REALITY. HE STATED, HOWEVER, THAT THE COMPLAINT WAS ONLY PARTIALLY TRUE, AS THE OTHER ASPECT HAD BEEN THE INABILITY OF THE CADRE TO OPERATE IN THE CONDITION OF INSECURITY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO SO ORGANIZE THE SITUATION THAT THE CADRE COULD BE PLACED IN THE AREA OF HIS WORK AND AFFORDED THE NECESSARY PROTECTION AND FACILITIES FOR THE WORK. THE STRATEGIC HAMLETS' PROGRAM WOULD PROVIDE BOTH OF THESE.

CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L NOFORN/CONTINUED CONTROL

STATE	ARMY/ACSI	NAVY	AIR	JCS	SECDEF	NSA	NIC	USIA	OCI	ONE	OCR	ORR	OO	AID	DIA

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VTF

TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

SMITH-BUNDY DUNGAN GILDNER KAYSEN PETERSEN SCHLESINGER TAYLOR BELK FORRESTAL KOMER RASKIN SAUNDERS

2. THE PROGRAM AS PLANNED BY NHU HAD THREE MAIN ELEMENTS WHICH WOULD MAKE IT PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE FOR VIETNAM.

A. IT WAS FIRST OF ALL TRADITIONAL, RESTING UPON THE BASIC UNIT OF VIETNAMESE SOCIETY. THUS IT CAPITALIZED UPON THE INGRAINED HABITS OF THE POPULATION.

B. THE SECOND ASPECT WAS THAT IT WOULD AFFORD THE MEANS TO MODERNIZE VIETNAMESE LIFE. NHU STATED THAT IT WAS LESS A PROBLEM OF RAISING THE STANDARD OF LIVING THAN OF CHANGING THE MODE OF LIVING. HE SAID THAT IF ATTENTION WAS GIVEN TO INSERTING NEW MODES OF LIFE INTO THE ORDINARY PEASANT'S EXISTENCE, IT WOULD INEVITABLY BRING SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES IN HIS ORIENTATION. NHU COMPARED THE RESULT OF THE INSERTION OF SMALL AUTOMOBILES, WASHING MACHINES, ETC., INTO THE LIFE OF THE EUROPEAN WORKING CLASS WHICH HE CLAIMED HAD DISRUPTED COMMUNIST INFLUENCE OVER THIS CLASS. AS A RESULT, NHU SAID, MOST EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES OPPOSED MODERNIZATION. HE STATED THAT THE ASIAN COMMUNIST PARTIES WERE LESS INTELLIGENT IN THEIR APPROACH, AS THEY ADVOCATED MODERNIZATION OF ASIAN LIFE WITHOUT REALIZING THAT IT WOULD INEVITABLY REDUCE THEIR OWN ORGANIZATIONAL POWER. NHU STATED THAT A STUDY OF STEPS APPROPRIATE FOR VIETNAM ALONG THIS LINE SHOULD BE MADE AND A CONSCIOUS EFFORT DEVOTED TO INSERTING THESE NEW MODES OF LIFE INTO VIETNAM. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE CITED THE EFFECT OF DISTRIBUTING BICYCLES WITH MICROMOTORS, THUS MAKING THE PEASANT MOBILE AND CHANGING HIS MODE OF LIFE. THE STRATEGIC HAMLET, HE REITERATED, WOULD AFFORD THE NECESSARY PROTECTION AND ECONOMIC BASE FOR SUCH A MODERNIZATION PROGRAM.

C. THE THIRD ELEMENT, NHU SAID, WOULD BE DEMOCRATIZATION. HE DEFINED IT AS THE APPLICATION OF LAW AND ORDER TO RURAL LIFE. HE STATED THAT AT PRESENT THE PEASANTS WERE EXPOSED TO ILLEGALITY BY THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS AND BY GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM (GVN) ELEMENTS, BOTH MILITARY AND CIVIL. THIS WAS IN PART A RESULT OF THE DISPERSION OF THE POPULATION AND ITS INABILITY TO ASSUME ITS OWN GOVERNANCE. AS AN INDUCEMENT TO FORM A STRATEGIC HAMLET, NHU SAID THE POPULATION SHOULD BE ASSURED THAT THE HAMLET WOULD BE GUARANTEED THE FULL APPLICATION OF LAW BY ITS OWN AUTHORITIES, THUS MOVING IT TOWARD A SYSTEM OF DEMOCRATIZATION APPROPRIATE TO THE COMMUNITY. HOWEVER, IT WOULD HAVE LITTLE OR NOTHING TO DO WITH CHANGES OF THE GOVERNMENT IN SAIGON. NHU STATED THAT HE HAD BROUGHT OUT IN A RECENT TALK TO GVN OFFICIALS THAT ONE COULD CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT IN SAIGON 35 TIMES WITH NO EFFECT UPON THE REAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, BUT THAT THE APPLICATION OF THE STRATEGIC HAMLETS' SYSTEM WOULD DEFINITELY AFFECT THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE COUNTRYSIDE IN A WAY WHICH TOUCHED THE POPULATION ITSELF. THE STRATEGIC HAMLET WOULD ALSO, ACCORDING TO NHU, AFFORD A BASIS FOR THE BUILDING OF INSTITUTIONS IN VIETNAM TO GIVE ADDITIONAL STABILITY, E.G., COOPERATIVES, MEDICAL SERVICES, EDUCATION, WOMENS' MOVEMENTS, YOUTH MOVEMENTS, ETC.

3. NHU STATED THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE STRATEGIC HAMLETS' CONCEPTS WITH A GROUP OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS RECENTLY, AND HAD MADE ONE VERY STRONG ADDITIONAL POINT TO THEM. (FIELD COMMENT. FVS-7034, TDCS-3/501,110 GAVE AN ACCOUNT, FROM A FAIRLY RELIABLE SOURCE, OF NHU'S REMARKS AT THE MEETING.) HE STATED THAT HE

WAS AWARE THAT THERE WAS MUCH DISCONTENT AMONG THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH, HE SAID, STEMMED FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO THE JOB. ANY LOCAL OFFICIAL WHO FACED A PROBLEM MADE A REQUEST TO HIS NEXT HIGHER AUTHORITY FOR ASSISTANCE AND WAS DISCONTENTED IF THE ASSISTANCE WAS INADEQUATE. THE NEXT LEVEL REQUESTED THE CHIEF OF PROVINCE, WHO REQUESTED ASSISTANCE FROM THE MINISTRY, AND HAD THE SAME REACTION. THE MINISTER MADE THE REQUEST OF THE PRESIDENT AND WAS DISCONTENTED AT INADEQUATE SUPPORT. THEORETICALLY, THE PRESIDENT SHOULD MAKE REQUESTS OF THE AMERICANS AND BE DISCONTENTED WITH THE AMERICANS FOR LACK OF ADEQUATE SUPPORT. NHU STATED THAT THE ENTIRE PROCESS WAS INFANTILE, AND A CHILDISH WAY OF DEPENDENCE UPON A SUPERIOR TO SOLVE ONE'S PROBLEMS. HE STATED THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO DEVELOP A MATURITY IN THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE SO THAT THEY WOULD TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOLVING THEIR OWN PROBLEMS, UTILIZING SUCH ASSISTANCE AS WAS GIVEN THEM, BUT NOT ATTEMPTING TO SHIFT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. HE STATED THAT THE STRATEGIC HAMLET WAS THE WAY TO INTRODUCE THE PROCESS OF BEGINNING MATURITY TO THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT. NHU SAID THAT THE OFFICIALS WERE MUCH AMUSED AT THE DESCRIPTION OF THE DISCONTENT AND FOUND MUCH VALIDITY IN HIS STATEMENT OF HOW TO OVERCOME IT. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO KEEP REPEATING THE LESSON, AS OTHERWISE THE OLD HABITS OF DEPENDENCE UPON POWERS ABOVE WOULD RETURN AND THE WHOLE VICIOUS CYCLE OF DISCONTENT WOULD START AGAIN.

4. MINISTER OF INTERIOR BUI VAN LUONG, IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION ON 13 FEBRUARY, STATED THAT NHU HAD GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS THAT THE STRATEGIC HAMLETS' PROGRAM BE CONDUCTED UNDER THE FULL CONTROL OF THE NEW INTERMINISTERIAL COMMISSION. HE SAID THAT NHU HAD SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT WISH A REPETITION OF THE ERRORS MADE IN THE INITIATION OF THE AGROVILLE PROGRAM. NHU EMPHASIZED THE NECESSITY OF EXPLAINING TO THE POPULATION WHAT IT WAS BEING ASKED TO DO AND OF FOLLOWING VERY STRICT RULES, FOR INSTANCE, THAT THE POPULATION BE ASKED TO ASSIST ONLY IN ITS OWN LOCALITY AND NOT BE REQUIRED TO WORK ON DISTANT AREAS. HE ALSO STATED THAT THE PROVINCE CHIEFS WERE INSTRUCTED NOT TO LAUNCH OFF IN ALL DIRECTIONS, CREATING STRATEGIC HAMLETS ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN IDEAS, BUT TO FOLLOW THE PROGRAM AND PATTERN TO BE ESTABLISHED BY THE STRATEGIC HAMLETS' COMMITTEE.

5. FIELD DISSEM. STATE ARMY NAVY AIR MAAG AID CINCPAC PACFLT ARPAC PACAF.

END OF MESSAGE